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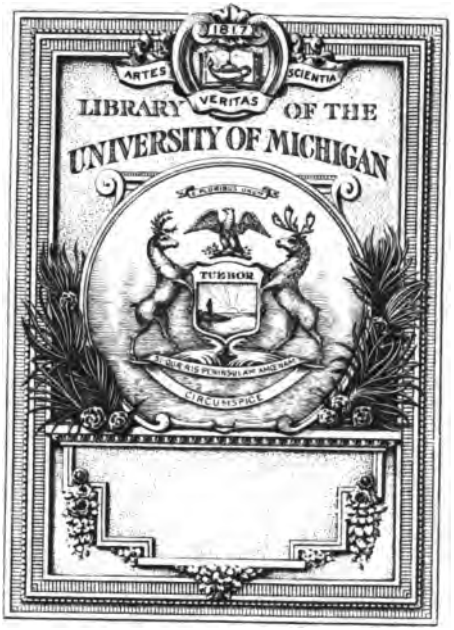

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W.A. Museum, 1913

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THE CALVERT
SCIENTIFIC EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

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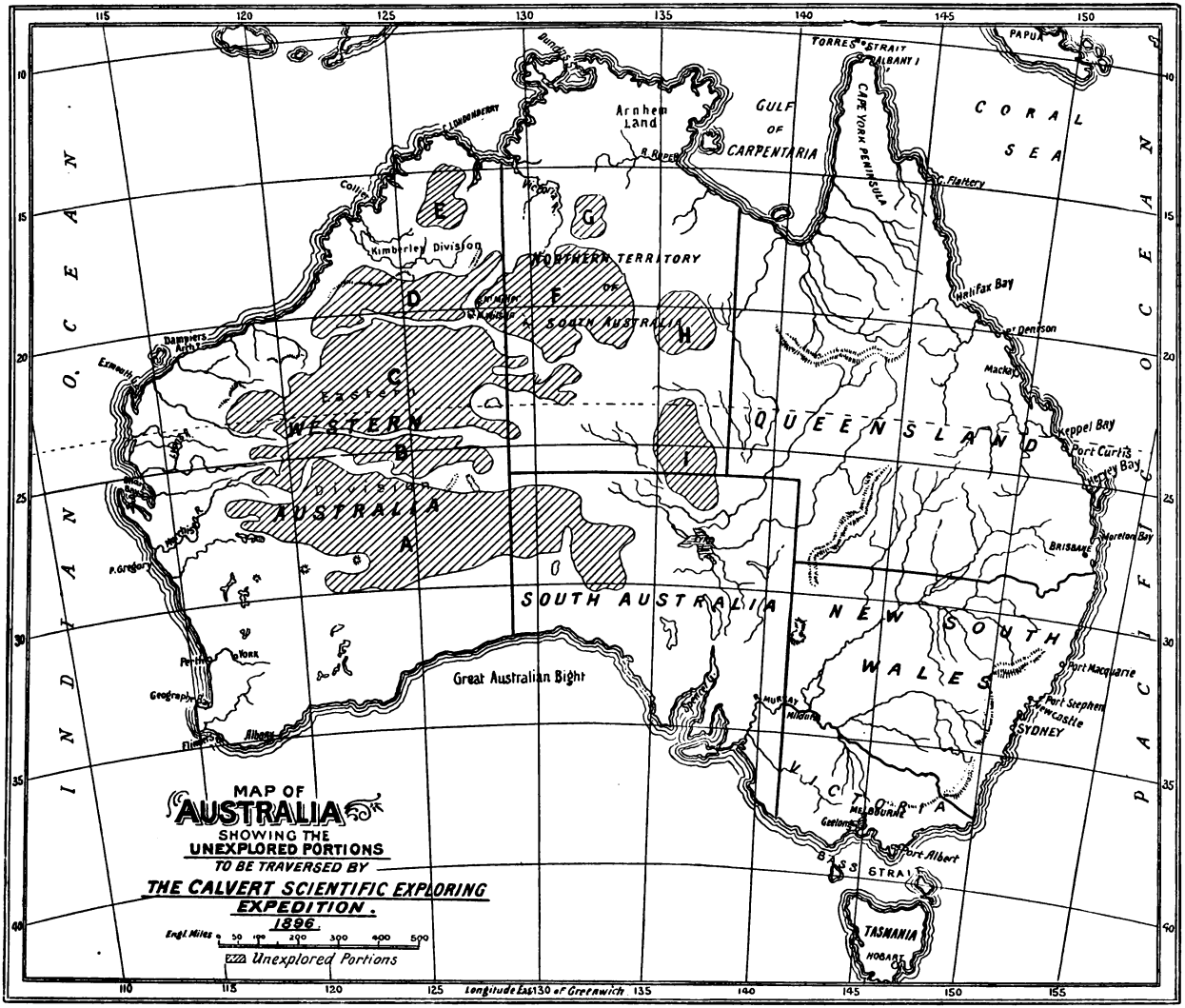

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THE CALVERT

SCIENTIFIC

EXPLORING EXPEDITION.

(Australia, 1896.)

COMPILED BY

J. G. HILL.

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PREFACE.

THE importance of the mission which the Calvert Scientific Exploring Expedition was formed to undertake, the value of the work it accomplished, and the heroic ardour with which the terrible search for the missing members of the party was pursued to the bitter end, will, I hope be considered ample warrant for the publication of the following brief and necessarily inadequate account. Even when it is admitted that the object of the expedition was only achieved in part, that its scientific value was further diminished by the compulsory abandonment of the hundreds of specimens collected, and that its records are overshadowed by the death of two members of the loyal little band of adventurers, there is still sufficient interest left in the undertaking to justify this rescue of the bare details of the story from the limbo of contemporary newspaper descriptions.

Mr. Albert F. Calvert, who bore the entire financial responsibility of the enterprise, gave the Royal Geographical Society's officers in Adelaide a free hand with regard to the organisation and direction of the venture. The details of the preparations that were made in Adelaide for the despatch of this uniquely-equipped exploratory expedition were eagerly read at the time by everybody who had any interest in

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Australian exploration, and it was acknowledged that nothing had been left undone which could, humanly speaking, have been done to carry the enterprise to a triumphant conclusion. The news of the safe arrival of the main body of the expedition at the Fitzroy River, Western Australia, after a series of forced night marches through what is described as the worst country in Greater Britain, was received with enthusiasm, and then for many weary months the heart of Australia palpitated with hopes and fears, until the announcement of the discovery of the bodies of the dead explorers put an end to the nation's suspense.

It is from the telegraphic news and the newspaper accounts which appeared in the Australian press at the time, that I have compiled the following summary of the expedition. Since my material has been in the printer's hands, I have heard that there is some probability of an official account being published, and my first inclination was to abandon my project. On further consideration, I concluded that, pending the issue of an authentic report, the particulars I am able to set down may be read with interest, without in any way detracting from the value of an official chronicle.

J. G. H.

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The Calvert Scientific Exploring Expedition.

Australian Exploration

LITTLE by little, laboriously but without surcease, from the 26th June, 1789—when Captain Trench, of His Majesty's Penal Settlement, Botany Bay, left Rose Hill at daybreak, and journeyed into the "trackless immeasurable desert," lying in "awful silence" between the South Pacific Ocean and the Blue Mountains—down to the present day, the exploration of Australia has engaged the best intellects, the best hearts, and the best energies that have ever been enlisted in the struggle of man against the fastnesses of nature. Mile by mile, and acre by acre, the great work of traversing, mapping, and revealing the secret places of a continent, in dimension only one-fourth less than that of Europe, has been steadily proceeded with for 115 years. Sturt and Mitchel, Grey, Eyre, and

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Elder Expedition

Leichardt, E. T. and A. C. Gregory, Kennedy, Warburton and Stuart, Burke and Wills, Sir John Forrest, Giles, Hodgkinson and Winnecke—these are only a few of the bright particular stars whose rays have been reflected in the field of Australian exploration. These men have led the van, and scores and hundreds of lesser adventurers have followed them, filling in the details and supplying the minor facts that now illuminate the once blank page which the earliest cartographers had styled "Terra Incognita." The "high emprise" has taken time and infinite labour; it has cost money and human life; and it has for long seemed on the point of completion.

In 1890, when Sir Thomas Elder conceived the patriotic idea of fitting out an expedition to explore and make known the remaining blank spaces on the map of Australia, some 340,000 square miles of country was still unmapped. The area sounds enormous, but one has only to remember the total area of Australia—2,954,417 square miles—to realise what had been accomplished in a little over a century. Although the Elder Expedition was an unfortunate and ill-fated undertaking, which ended in the resignation of the scientific members of the party, and the abandonment of the project at the moment when the great drought had broken up all over Western Australia, and the continuation of the work would have been comparatively easy, it nevertheless succeeded in travelling some 2,745 miles,

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and mapping over 80,000 square miles of unexplored country. David Lindsay

Mr. David Lindsay, the leader of the Elder Expedition, summarises the work accomplished by the explorers as follows:

> "From May 2nd to June 2nd, 1891, we travelled to reach starting point (Mount Illbillie, the highest point in the Everard Range), 255 miles. From June 6th to October 3rd we travelled through unexplored country, 1,813 miles; through unexplored country searching for water, etc., 306 miles; flying trips same routes, afterwards travelled by caravan, 336 miles. From October 4th to November 2nd, in depôt at Fraser's Range. From November 2nd to November 26th, through new country, 98 miles; looking for water in unexplored country, 225 miles. From November 27th to December 7th, resting camels near Golden Valley. From December 7th to January 3rd, 1892, travelling through mapped country, 412 miles. From January 4th to February 22nd, resting camels, taking stores from Moorowie to Murchison, and shifting depôt. From February 23rd to April 4th, flying trip (by Mr. Wells) through unexplored country, 834 miles. Total, 4,279 miles, which gives an average rate of travel for eleven months, including all stoppages, of nearly 15 miles per day."

Most of the work of the expedition was done in block A on the map. In January, 1892, Mr. Lindsay left his party in camp, some fourteen miles from the Murchison Goldfields, and proceeded to Geraldton to get into telegraphic communication with the Geographical Society in Adelaide. The Council of the Society summoned him to South Australia, and, as the result of

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Elder Expedition Abandoned

their deliberations, he returned to the Murchison, and disbanded the expedition. In a final report, dated Adelaide, October 4th, 1892, Mr. Lindsay said:

> "The abandonment of the expedition was a terrible disappointment to me. That men who had so little sense of their duty to their leader and to their generous employer, should have been the primary cause of the break-up of such a splendidly-equipped expedition, causing the opportunity of completing in such a thorough manner the exploration of those extensive unknown regions in Australia to be lost, is a matter that not only those intimately associated with the expedition, but geographers throughout the world must ever regret. I desire again to place on record my full appreciation of the splendid loyalty and assistance of Mr. L. A. Wells, the surveyor, and afterwards second officer; and also of the loyalty, good behaviour, and willing attention to his duties shown by Alfred Warren."

During the succeeding five years the gradual expansion of the limits of civilisation added to our knowledge of much of the country that was traversed by the Elder Expedition. In the search for gold the adventurers, taking their lives in their hands, ventured further and further afield, until the spaces marked A and B on the map were added to the Survey Department's catalogue of known territory. But spaces C, D, E, F, H and I, comprising an aggregate area of 260,000 square miles, remained unmapped and practically unexplored. Many projected expeditions to continue and complete the unfinished work which Sir Thomas Elder's party had

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failed to accomplish were discussed, but they were unproductive of practical results. Projected Expedition

Meantime Mr. Albert F. Calvert had published the first volume of his exhaustive and invaluable history of "The Exploration of Australia," and he was enthused with the ambition to be associated with such an enterprise. He had himself penetrated three times into the interior of North-west Australia, and in 1891 he had accepted a proposal to form an expedition to traverse the region which is situated south of Lake Amadeus in South Australia to the outlaying auriferous parallel connected with the Upper Murchison River in Western Australia. But the delays and postponements caused by the responsible managers of the undertaking in London interfered with every detail of Mr. Calvert's plans; and when he arrived in Adelaide, and put himself into communication with Messrs. Main, Sells and Co., who were to have supplied the camels, he learned that they had been taken up for other work. In the same year the Elder party made their futile attempt to exhaust the blank spaces on the map of Australia.

This failure only added zest to Mr. Calvert's desire to be connected even, as he himself has expressed it, "as a non-combatant in this warfare against the hostility of the wilderness," and in the late Autumn of 1895 he sailed from London on his fourth visit to Australia with the determination to give practical effect to his public-spirited aspirations. In the first place he

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The Calvert Expedition

submitted his scheme, and his offer to pay all the expenses, to the Government of Western Australia, and invited them to undertake the control and management of the enterprise. But the Ministry, in view of their many obligatory liabilities, did not see their way to accept the responsibility entailed, and Mr. Calvert went on to Adelaide in January, 1896, and placed his proposal before the South Australian Council of the Royal Geographical Society. The Council warmly welcomed the idea, and readily agreed to undertake the preliminary and working arrangements. Beyond appointing the leader of the expedition, and stipulating that the undertaking should be conducted on the lines of the Elder Expedition, Mr. Calvert gave the South Australian Council a free hand.

In their letter confirming the general arrangements agreed with Mr. Calvert in Adelaide, the Council thus set forth the proposed route:

> "It is generally recognised that space C is the part of unexplored Australia round which the interest chiefly centres. Geographically, because of the existence of a string of salt lakes trending away to the north-west of Lake Macdonald; because, too, possibly high ranges of hills may be found in the north-easterly part of its area. You yourself have traversed its north-west area, and, therefore, know what exists there.
>
> "Historically, because Baron Sir F. Von Mueller is of opinion that possibly traces of the long-lost Leichardt may be found there; and should your expedition unravel the mystery of his fate, it would be a good deed.
>
> "Commercially, because, through the eastern part of space C

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will probably be found a stock route, if there is to be one, opening communication between our Northern Territory and North-west Queensland with the goldfields to the south-west of Western Australia. Appointment of Leader

"Spaces D, F and H remain for examination, but, doubtless, you would be again in Australia before the expedition arrives at that stage of its work. Spaces F, G and H could, perhaps, be mapped *en route* for the head of the South Australian railway line, if it be decided that they should be filled up on the map."

Mr. Lawrence Allen Wells, of the South Australian Survey Department, who, as second in command of the Elder Expedition, had won the warmest praise and thanks of Mr. David Lindsay, had already been approached by Mr. Calvert with an invitation to captain his party; and subsequently, when the consent of the Government had been obtained, he accepted the position. In consultation with the South Australian Council of the Royal Geographical Society and Mr. A. T. Magarey, Mr. Calvert's Australian representative, Mr. Wells appointed his cousin, Mr. C. F. Wells, second in command; Mr. George A. Keartland, ornithologist and taxidermist; Mr. George L. Jones, photographer and collector; Mr. James Trainer, cook; Mr. Welbourne, assistant; and Bejah, an Afghan, to have charge of the camels.

Mr. L. A. Wells, whose valuable exploration work includes the discoveries of Lake Darlot, Lake Way, Mount St. Samuel, and other country where goldfields were subsequently opened up, is a South Australian,

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L. A. and C. F. Wells

having been born at Yallum in 1860. He entered the South Australian Survey service in 1878, and for three years he was engaged as one of the surveyors who fixed the boundary line between South Australia and Queensland. He was reporting on pastoral leases before he joined the Elder Expedition, and subsequently was associated with the work of the Pastoral Board.

Mr. C. F. Wells, was born at Lake Colac, Victoria, in 1849, and was appointed a cadet in the Survey Department of South Australia in 1866. Two years later he was made a member of the Survey Expedition which was sent to the Northern Territory. During a portion of the time he was in the Territory he was with the late McLachlan's party, that discovered at Kekwick Springs, and on the Mary River, trees marked by McDouall Stuart, which proved that that explorer had gone through to the coast. After nearly three years in the Northern Territory, Mr. Wells returned to Adelaide in 1871, and was re-appointed to the Survey staff of the Surveyor-General's Department. In 1889, he again went to the Northern Territory to take up the duties of surveyor in the Land Office, and on returning to Adelaide, after two years' service, he was appointed to a position in the Lands Titles Office.

Mr. Keartland, who went with the Horn Expedition to the MacDonnell Ranges in 1894, and Mr. G. L. Jones, a son of the Conservator of Water for South Australia, joined the party in Adelaide; while Mr.

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Wellbourne, a nephew of the Hon. Roman Playford, met them in Western Australia.

Departure of the Expedition

All the arrangements were forwarded as rapidly as possible with a view to despatching the expedition while yet the winter season was before them, and by the end of May everything was in readiness for the start. On May 23rd, 1896, the officers of the South Australian Survey Department gave Messrs. L. A. and C. F. Wells a farewell dinner, at which the Surveyor-General, Mr. W. Strawbridge, presided. A second farewell gathering was held a week later, when Mr. Simpson Newland, the President of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society, Sir Charles Todd, and a number of other prominent South Australians, bade the little party of adventurers good-bye and God-speed, and they left on May 23rd for Geraldton with the best wishes of all who admire the exhibition of skill and courage in the attempt to solve the mysteries of the great Australian interior.

The expedition proceeded to Mullewa, the terminus of the railway from Geraldton, where the camels required for the journey and the balance of the outfit and scientific apparatus awaited them. Mr. Calvert received from Mr. Magarey, on the day of their departure from Adelaide, the following telegram:

> "Everything conceivable has been done. We may claim, I believe, that a more perfectly selected and equipped expedition to do Australian exploration has never been sent away. All that

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Arrival at the Fitzroy

experience and foresight could dictate has received the most careful attention."

A further telegram was received by Mr. Calvert from Cue, announcing "Expedition started on June 19th;" and with that laconic message the first chapter of the history of the Calvert Scientific Exploring Expedition closes.

Nearly five months elapsed before the expedition was again heard of, and then a Reuter's telegram, despatched from Perth on November 13th, 1896, contained the following:

> "The Australian Expedition, which left Adelaide in May last, under the leadership of Mr. L. A. Wells, to explore the regions in the interior of Southern and Western Australia, has arrived at Fitzroy River in the north of Western Australia. Two members of the party are missing, and fears are entertained for their safety."

Two days later a further telegram brought the news that Mr. L. A. Wells had had a hard journey from the Mount Bates Depôt, 500 miles distant from Fitzroy, owing to lack of water; and an official telegram from the Government of South Australia announced that all effects and the collections of the scientists had been abandoned, and that Charles Wells and Jones were missing. Reuter, in a later cablegram, reported that no fears were entertained for the missing men.

The hardships endured by Mr. L. A. Wells and the main party began when they were unable to find Johanna

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Springs, which were either dry or else wrongly marked on the chart. Failing to locate this water, Mr. Wells pushed on to a small native well, where, in the course of two days, he obtained some 360 gallons of water to supply the needs of the camels. As the animals were in a bad way he was compelled to abandon five of them, together with all his surplus gear, firearms, ammunition, specimens, photographic camera, and survey plant. These effects included Mr. Keartland's collection of about 3,000 specimens, including the Princess of Wales parrot and other prizes of great rarity. Some four buckets of water were reserved for the journey, and with them, which proved the means of saving the party, they made their way northward through the red sand desert. Owing to the intensity of the heat and the terrible condition of the camels they had to traverse the last 170 miles by night.

C. F. Wells and Jones Missing

Mr. C. F. Wells and Mr. G. L. Jones had left the main party some 360 miles back to make a flying trip eighty miles west of the line of route, and rejoin the leader at a fixed point about thirty or forty miles south of Johanna Springs. They took with them three camels, sixty gallons of water, and flour and provisions for a month's journey, although they were expected to come up with the main party in about twelve days. Failing the leader's arrival at the appointed spot, they were to proceed to Johanna Springs; and when Mr. Wells arrived six days late at the neighbourhood of the

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Effects Abandoned

springs, he expected to find his cousin and Mr. Jones awaiting him. The weakness of the party and the scarcity of water did not allow Mr. Wells to spend any time in searching for the Johanna Spring. His only alternatives were to make for the Oakover waters to the west, or to push rapidly northwards and strike the Fitzroy. He adopted the latter, and concluded that the two missing members were taking the Oakover direction, or were following in his track. In either case the utmost confidence was felt in the ability of Mr. C. F. Wells to reach a place of safety. He was regarded as one of the best bushmen in Australia; determined, resourceful; possessing the nerve to attempt the impossible, and capable of achieving success if mortal man could command it. Vigorous efforts were at once made to despatch search parties to encounter and render assistance to the absent men, but so little real anxiety was felt as to their safety that the leader formed a depôt to recruit the surviving twelve camels preparatory to proceeding to Lake Amadeus in the Northern Territory and thence to Mount Bates.

It is advisable to insert here Mr. L. A. Wells' telegraphic account of the journey, which he despatched from Fitzroy Crossing, November 15th, to Mr. Magarey, and then proceed to recount the sad story of the brave and arduous searches for the missing men, which resulted in the revelation of their tragic fate.

Mr. Wells' communication is as follows:

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"Detained coming up river with weak camels. Arrived Quandbren 12th, with Keartland, Trainer, and two Afghans, twelve camels. Had most trying time crossing sand ridges at right angles since August 10th. Left Lake Way July 16th, north-easterly, forming depôt, latitude 25 degrees 54′, longitude 122 degrees 20′. Excellent waterholes; fair country. Flying trip, August 10th to September 8th, north-east Mount Bates, and north-north-east 200 miles without water. Found good spring well, latitude 23 degrees 23′, longitude 124 degrees. Returning south-westerly found cave, native drawings, and human skeleton, probably native; latitude 23 degrees 58′, longitude 123 degrees 25′ (?). South-west to Giles's route, south to depôt. Left depôt September 14th, whole party reaching good well on September 29th. Discovered another splendid well latitude 22 degrees 51′, longitude 123 degrees 53′. Travelled northerly from here, latitude Johanna Springs, and north-north-east to Fitzroy River. The Leader's Report

"From Mount Bates to within twenty-five miles Fitzroy, distance 500 miles, wilderness of continuous sand ridges and spinifex; few low ridges and ranges of clay, rock, and sandstone, partly covered with drift. Last 300 miles almost destitute of camel feed; little water; sand ridges more numerous, steep, high-crowned with red drift. Owing to this, and intense heat from sand, camels collapsed 170 miles from Fitzroy. Latter distance traversed 50 miles by moonlight, 120 by starlight; unable work camels after nine a.m. On three occasions found ourselves in most critical position for want of water. Five camels abandoned dead and dying, thirst and want.

"Obliged abandon Keartland's and Jones's collections, all equipment, provisions, personal effects, at 160 and 170 miles back, only taking absolute necessaries carry through to Fitzroy. Arrived river 6th inst., daylight with one bucket water in kegs, and but two camels able to carry light packs whilst travelling. Obliged look for water on foot, tracking native sandhills on

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The Flying Trip

short allowance, walking from ten to fourteen miles day. Had to discontinue, exhausted from intense heat and thirst. Only able spend one day looking Johanna Springs, and unable find. Believe considerably east my track. Reached Fitzroy River at nearest point, which we thought near Mount Tuckfield, and midway Derbu and crossing."

Mr. G. A. Keartland added a few details to this concise report. All went well, he declared, till July 28th, when two of the camels ate the poison plant near Lake Augusta, but recovered under treatment. A depôt was formed on good water and feed, and Mr. Wells and two companions then made a flying trip of 500 miles, returning to the depôt on August 8th. On August 14th a start was made across the desert. The Forrest track was passed on September 16th, and that of Giles at a late date. When near Warburton's line the camels commenced to collapse, owing to the privations they had undergone, the intense heat, and the number of sandhills. Six were abandoned on October 21st, when the party had sufficient water for ten days. They obtained a little more at a native well, but everything except good water for themselves was abandoned, and all speed was made for the Fitzroy River.

The rumour that gained currency at the time, that there was trouble and unpleasantness among the members of the expedition, was indignantly denied by Mr. G. A. Keartland, who, on his return to Adelaide, declared that throughout the whole journey the best of

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fellowship prevailed. "There was," he said, "no discord of any kind. Every one was fired with the desire to do his best for the expedition, and if any one erred it was in trying to do too much." Loyalty of the Party

As Mr. L. A. Wells's judgment was also called into question at the time for allowing his cousin and Jones to take this flying trip, the following account of the separation, the reasons that governed it, and the necessity for the main party pushing on instead of waiting longer in the neighbourhood of Johanna Springs, must also have a place in any pamphlet dealing with the expedition. In the early stages of the journey Mr. L. A. Wells made two flying trips, and Mr. Keartland says that Mr. Charles Wells frequently importuned his cousin to allow him to undertake one of these auxiliary expeditions. The leader consented, and it was at first arranged that Mr. Keartland should accompany the second in command on such a trip. But Mr. Keartland's lameness would have made it necessary to send an Afghan to assist in the heavy duties, which would have meant their taking a larger supply of water. When they reached Separation Well Mr. L. A. Wells decided that only two men should go, and he asked Keartland if he would give place to Mr. Jones.

Let me continue the narrative in the words of Mr. Keartland's report, which was published on his return to Adelaide in June, 1897:—

"I knew it was beyond my strength to lift a 290 lb. cask of

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Keartland's Report

water; and as it was necessary for only two to go, I consented to be left behind. Mr. Jones was delighted at the chance, as he and Mr. Charles Wells had been personal friends for a long time. When we parted on the 11th October, Mr. Jones came to me and said, 'I hope you don't feel disappointed. . . .' He seemed sympathetic with me because I was not going. These men were not ordered away; I want to emphasise that. It is quite possible that if they had not been so eager Mr. Wells would have gone himself, for he was always prepared to do the lion's share of the work, and on some occasions I think he overtaxed himself.

"Mr. L. A. Wells considered that the flying party should go to the westward of the direct line of march for a distance of from 80 to 100 miles, then turn north-east and cut our track about thirty miles south of the latitude of Johanna Springs. We expected to meet again in twelve or fourteen days. They had provisions that would have lasted them for a month, and they had sixty gallons of water. We reckoned they had sufficient water to see the men and camels right into the Fitzroy River if they used it with economy, as they were advised to do. Mr. Lawry Wells was emphatic about exercising economy, and told them how much they could use. He worked out a calculation, showing how much water they should use, and how far it would take them. The main party were amply supplied with provisions, and could have gone for two months, but the other two had a greater proportion of water per man than we had.

"Up to this we had good weather, but the very day we parted at Separation Well it became hot. On the 17th, Mr. Lawry Wells went out to find water, and he returned in a terrible state of exhaustion at one o'clock in the morning, with blisters on his feet the size of a penny. He had found native tracks at a soakage well about 100 miles north of the latter place. We reached this well on the 18th, and had to spend thirty-six hours in baling fifty-five buckets of water with a pannikin. It was very dangerous

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work, on account of the probability of the sand-bank falling in. Mr. Wells insisted that either he or I should do the work, as it was too dangerous to send the men down. All that water was given to the seventeen camels, which were all in a state of collapse. The Expedition in Difficulties

"We pushed on from there until the 23rd of October, when we reached another native well, and the camels were again in a state of collapse, due to the intense heat and the scarcity of feed. At one time they were four days without getting a good feed. We had to put in thirty-six hours there and got about 180 gallons, all baled with a pannikin. Five buckets of this were put into the casks for our own use, and the rest was given to the camels. At this well we had to be particularly alert, on account of the natives. We left there at eleven o'clock at night, and had not gone more than three miles when one of the picked camels, which Mr. Charles Wells had been particularly desirous of taking, fell down dead. The flying party, I may remark, took with them the three very best camels we had. . . . The next camel to fall down was Mahdi, which had formerly been Mr. Charles Wells's camel. At the native well at which we got the 180 gallons, we had to abandon all surplus stores which could be replaced afterwards. On the 26th October everything had to be abandoned except the bare necessaries of life—all our clothing, tools, guns, etc. We were then close to where we expected to meet the others. We were some eight days later than we had arranged, owing to the time spent in procuring water. This delay had been unavoidable, as our supply would not have taken us to the meeting place. It is my opinion that C. F. Wells and Jones crossed ahead of us before we reached that point, but we reckoned that we were ahead of them. Even if they had crossed before us we could not have noticed their tracks because from the 18th October we were travelling only at night. As soon as they reached the line which they knew we should follow they were to keep to it. It was ar-

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A Close Shave

ranged that both parties should send up smoke signals at ten and twelve o'clock in the day; but when we commenced making these signals three days before we reached the meeting point, the natives, who were out hunting, were burning spinifex to drive the game out, and the consequence was that there were half-a-dozen fires.

"We all knew the finding of Johanna Springs was very doubtful, as Warburton was so much out in his reckoning when he reached the Oakover that he said the position of this spot must be uncertain, and what did it matter in such country. The instructions which Mr. Charles Wells had were that if he had any difficulty in finding Johanna Springs he was to push on at once to the Fitzroy, as though no such thing as an imperative meeting at the Springs had been arranged. When we got to this locality we could find no trace of the Springs, and Mr. Laurence Wells suffered great hardships in trying to locate it. He then asked me what I thought it was best to do. I said, 'As we have enough water with economy on allowance, we had better push straight for the river and lose no more time.' Our camels were dying, and we had to abandon five altogether. He afterwards consulted the others, and found that their views coincided with my own.

" My suggestion was agreed to and we pushed on. We gave the two best camels a bucket of water each, and the others had none from the 24th October to the 6th November, and during that period we covered 140 miles. The weather was intensely hot. We could not move from under the tarpaulin in daylight, and the camels would not move from under the trees half-an-hour after daybreak. We pushed on to the river, hoping and expecting that as we were behind time the others were ahead of us. On arriving at Quandbren Station, Mr. Rose, the proprietor, informed us that our comrades could not have passed that track without him seeing them, as they must pass his house. To make sure he sent a boy on horseback to the telegraph station on the Fitzroy.

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The boy returned with the news that no tidings could be ascertained at the telegraph station, or even at other likely places to which the station-master had telegraphed. Mr. Wells immediately decided that he would start back with the six best camels and a supply of water to try and pick up their tracks and follow them."

Anxiety for Missing Men

As soon as the first news of the arrival of the incomplete party at Fitzroy River reached Adelaide, Mr. Calvert's representative put himself at once into communication with the nearest source of information, and adopted immediate measures to secure the despatch of rescue parties either from the north or west. He requested Sir John Forrest, the Premier of Western Australia, and Mr. David Lindsay to lend what aid they could, and telegraphed to Mr. Wells for all particulars as to number and condition of camels and men that were with him, with the object of sending out a search party from the Fitzroy. Sir John Forrest promised to do everything possible to afford relief, and on November 16th Mr. Keartland telegraphed:

"Wells and two Afghans, with six best camels, four casks of water, have started to retrace tracks and see what can be done."

On November 19th the West Australian Government sent out a police party, consisting of two mounted men and four native trackers, to proceed along the south of the Fitzroy River to the end of the St. George's Range, and then out into the desert to try to cut the tracks of the missing men.

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Search Parties Despatched

Mr. A. T. Magarey, who was indefatigable in his efforts to secure all the available assistance in the search for the missing, next approached the West Australian Government with the request that they would send out a rescue party under the leadership of Mr. Rudall, the Government Surveyor, with the camels which he had recently used in a survey trip in the North-west, and the whole of the stock and equipment was placed at the disposal of Mr. Calvert's representative. Mr. Rudall consented to return to Roebourne, where the camels had been left, and head a relief party. Instructions were wired to Roebourne to proceed with preparations, and Mr. Rudall, accompanied by a reliable assistant, proceeded to Cossack.

On November 25th a telegram from Fitzroy announced the return of Mr. Wells, who had been unable to proceed with his search for the missing men on account of the extreme weakness of the camels. He had left water and rations on the track, and without waiting to rest after his tiring vigil, he secured the assistance of a police constable and a native who knew the country and the water holes, and with six of the best police horses made a second journey in the direction of Johanna Springs, in the hope that the explorers might be camping at the water to rest their camels.

Meantime, on November 24th, a local squatter, named Buchanan, who was reputed one of the best horsemen and ablest bushmen in Australia, left Hall's

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Creek, Kimberley, with two black boys and four camels, in search of the missing men of Wells' party. W. Australian Government Search Party

Mr. Magarey also received offers from two well-known surveyors, Mr. Geyer and Mr. Hourigan, who were at Nullagine with camels, to join Mr. Rudall's search party. Mr. Rudall decided not to increase his party, and on December 1st, with two Europeans, a native tracker, and twelve camels, he left Roebourne for the upper Oakover, *via* Mallina and Marble Bar.

Mr. Wells and Trooper Palmer returned to Fitzroy on December 3rd, after a ten days' trip on the back track. They had proceeded in a south-west direction for sixty miles, and were then turned back by the condition of the horses, which could not be persevered with through the endless tracts of spinifex and sandhills, that yielded neither water nor feed.

Mr. Buchanan, on his return to Hall's Creek early in December, reported having seen on November 4th the tracks of a large train of camels sixty miles west of Salt Sea, the westernmost lake into which Stuart's Creek empties, latitude 20·20. The tracks he estimated to be about a week old, but he was unable to follow them up, owing to the badness of the camel feed and the intensity of the heat.

The gravest fears were now entertained for the safety of the lost explorers, and the prospect of the Calvert Expedition having a tragic termination was

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Mr. L. A. Wells' Third Attempt

everywhere discussed. Mr. Ernest Giles, who was interviewed on the subject, said:

> "The country where the missing men separated from the main body is open desert, with shifting dry sand constantly being whirled about by varying winds, so that a track made to-day is obliterated a few days after. I think it will be almost impossible to follow these men with anything like certainty, and it is more than probable that they will have to fight their own way out or perish in attempting to do so."

On December 5th Mr. Wells and Mr. Buchanan set out again from Fitzroy, with the intention of penetrating, if necessary, fifty miles south of Johanna to the locality of the abandoned stores. They took Bejah, Mr. Wells' Afghan camel driver, and Mr. Buchanan's black tracker, and were prepared to be out for three months.

Meanwhile, the Hon. David Carnegie's party reached Hall's Creek, but had seen no tracks of the missing men.

A native tracker, sent out by Messrs. Warburton and Rogers, returned with a report that the desert natives declared that they had seen two men on a creek in the vicinity of Mount McPherson heading westward, and within four days' journey of Nullagine township. Mr. Magarey telegraphed to obtain further particulars as to the appearance of the men. He also communicated to Sir John Forrest his opinion that instead of going on to Nullagine the stragglers would probably travel in another direction towards Marble Bar, and asked that the Government Officers at the latter town-

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ship might be instructed to arrange for a camel party to go out from Nullagine in search of them.

Traces of Missing Men Discovered

On January 12th, 1897, Mr. L. A. Wells telegraphed from Fitzroy reporting that his third expedition after the lost men had resulted in failure. The intense heat, steep sand ridges, and almost total absence of food, had told so terribly upon the camels that it was necessary to find water for them every third day. Three camels were poisoned, and after accomplishing a journey of a hundred miles he was forced to abandon the attempt. Mr. Buchanan described the desert as the worst he had ever seen in any part of Australia.

Mr. Rudall returned to the Oakover River, and from thence despatched a telegram from Bamboo Creek, dated January 17th, with the information that he had come upon tracks of the missing men at 130 miles out from Braeside Station, but had lost them again in the shifting sand. He had also heard from some natives that two white men and three camels had gone west, and he was preparing to go up the river and search for the tracks. Mr. Magarey telegraphed in reply that the explorers were evidently in the vicinity of Mount McPherson, or between that place and the head of the Oakover. He added:

> "Institute a thorough search, and let us know the result in the fullest detail, with full distances and bearings. We are relying on you not to leave the search until the men are found, and this should not be difficult as water is now abundant."

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Mr. Rudall's Second Expedition

Mr. Rudall started out again on January 19th to make a careful examination of the country where he previously found the tracks of missing men. Although three organised rescue parties and several independent adventurers were now in the desert braving the heat and hardships of one of the most terrible summers ever known in this waterless and shadeless land—when the water in the infrequent oases registered 121 degrees, and the thermometer stood at 120 in the shade—more volunteers were still forthcoming. Mr. Hodgson, the manager of Messrs. Warburton and Rodger's station at Braeside, organised a fourth party, consisting of Mr. John Connaughton and Mr. Henty, two experienced bushmen, who, with a black boy and five horses, made a dash for Mount McPherson through the burning desert. At the same time Mr. Hodgson arranged with Mr. Rudall's assistant, Mr. Crofton, to take the spare camels and two months' rations and search the country in the neighbourhood of Running Water, while he sent Messrs. Osborne and Trotman, with three camels and a good supply of rations, to camp at Running Water, and keep a sharp look out for the missing men. Even at this far advanced stage of the search all hope of rescue had not been given up, and we find so astute a bushman as Mr. Hodgson telegraphing to Mr. Magarey:

> "In my opinion there is a probability of the men being found alive. I think that their camels knocked up, and that they had to abandon them, and they may have had the good fortune when

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continuing the journey on foot to have found a permanent water hole. Wells, being an experienced bushman, and knowing the danger of leaving such a place, would stay there so long as fish and game could be procured, and in the hope of a rescue party being sent in search of them." Lost Explorers Reported Murdered

On February 8th the first forecast of the fate of the explorers was received in Perth from Mr. Rudall, at Bamboo Creek, in the following telegram:

"A messenger arrived to-night with news from Connaughton, at Running Water. Connaughton has travelled up the western branch beyond Skull Springs, and in the locality of Bee Hill found natives, who told him that the natives on the edge of the desert, at a pool called Wadararee, had killed two men and one camel; also that the two remaining camels were at a pool called Taratara, on Woodie Woodie Creek. This is the name of the eastern branch of the Oakover. Connaughton cut across to Woodie Woodie Creek, and, seeing my tracks, concluded that I had followed the camels, and heard of the men's deaths. He accordingly returned to Running Water. . . . I shall proceed to Running Water with Trotman, Crofton, and a native, where we shall join Connaughton and Henty. With their horses we shall have a better chance of catching the natives, as the country is too rough for camels."

This news was regarded in Adelaide as "an absurd rumour;" but in reply to Mr. Magarey's urgent request for fuller information, Mr. Hodgson telegraphed from Braeside on February 17th:

"There is no error. Mr. Rudall is satisfied the tracks are those of the missing men. One track is that of a heavy man, the other that of a lighter man. Rudall believes the heavy one is that of Wells. The natives saw the men at the well, but

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Discovery of Dead Bodies

Rudall thinks they did not stay long, as the water made too slowly to give the camels a drink. The men did not camp there at night, but he is convinced that the well was visited by two white men and three camels. The camels' tracks showed no signs of weakness on account of the men having to lead them. The natives could not describe the men, but Rudall failed to pick up the tracks. There is now a probability of the mystery being solved. I would suggest waiting Rudall's return before sending other parties. There has been no rain, and water is scarce in the direction of Johanna Springs."

On March 8th a brief telegram was received from Nullagine, stating that the remains of two men, supposed to be Wells and Jones, had been discovered. It was followed by a long telegraphic message from Rudall, dated from Roy Hill Station *via* Nullagine. Apart from its interest as a page in the history of this remarkable search, the despatch is highly instructive as disclosing the difficulty that the rescuers experienced in obtaining information or assistance from the Aborigines, and no apology need be made for reproducing it in full:

"Have found the remains of two men murdered by the natives about 80 miles south-south-east of Roy Hill, in longitude 120 deg. 10 min. and latitude 23 deg. 35 min., but we could find nothing by which to identify them, the natives having taken everything away. We could not continue the search for we arrived to-day at Roy Hill Station with only one day's provisions left. The friends of the deceased men may be able to identify them by their teeth. The younger man's skeleton was dry, and had no hair about it. From the lower right jaw the third molar from the back is missing, and one is decayed. From the lower left jaw two teeth are missing; the third molar from the back and

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the fourth from the front. The skull measures 20¾ inches, and has a very prominent forehead. The older man's skeleton had a quantity of decomposed matter about it, with black hair and beard, but we could see no grey hairs. On the right top jaw, the third molar from the back is broken, and from the right lower jaw the first molar from the front is missing. From the left lower jaw the first molar from the front is also missing, and on the left top jaw one molar is slightly decayed, and the two front teeth on the lower jaw are slightly decayed. The skull measures 20¼ inches. The older man was tall, and the younger man of medium height, and the natives said he had only a few hairs on the chin. The skulls should be examined by a doctor to see if they are those of white men. Remains Described

"I left Toongoonarragee Pool, longitude 121 deg. 12 min. (longitudes all approximate), latitude 21 deg. 40 min., with Messrs. Trotman, Crofton, Connaughton and Henty, and natives Cherry, George and Charley. We travelled up Woodie Woodie Creek, an eastern branch of the Oakover, for twenty miles, to where I had seen camel tracks on my previous trip, thence south-easterly to the rock holes, called Wanjarlong—longitude 121 deg. 30 min., latitude 22 deg. 16 min. Here we caught a native who had heard of two white men with two camels being murdered further south. Took him to show us the water. He took us through some rough stony ranges in a south-east direction for two days. We saw a few tracks of a single camel going north near rock hole, called Marloo Marloo—longitude 121 deg. 30 min., latitude 22 deg. 26 min. Then we went west for a few miles, where we surprised a camp, and caught a native man and youth. Connaughton here had a narrow escape; a spear entered his shirt. These natives had heard of two white men and two camels being murdered at a place called Wadera, further south. We left our other natives, and took these two to show us the place.

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Suspicious Conduct of Natives

"Travelled south-west for fourteen miles, and cut the eastern branch of the Oakover River, again following it up for sixteen miles, and on south for eight miles, to a large clay hole, called Talawana, about four miles east of the river, in longitude 121 deg. 15 min., and latitude 22 deg. 53 min. Wadera is the name of a low range of hills seven miles south of Talawana. We searched the locality for two days, but could find no trace of the men. Saw tracks of a single camel there, and about a mile east of Talawana found, and followed north for ten miles, tracks of a single camel loose, coming south-south-east. The native youth volunteered to show us some more natives, so we went about twelve miles south-east, and caught three splendid men. They also had heard of two white men being murdered further south, but no camels. Released the other natives and took these, having promised to release them on finding the men.

"Travelled south-westerly for three and a-half days a distance of seventy miles, where we surprised a camp of six men and twelve women. One of these, a bandy man, evidently a chief, was very communicative, and said the white men were murdered near there; picked out two of their number as amongst the murderers, and they offered to show us the place. They took us about south by west for the remainder of the day and till mid-day of the next, a distance of twenty miles. I suspected treachery on the first night, so secured all the men with ropes and watched them all night, as we were among some of the worst natives of Western Australia. Several made determined efforts to escape, but failed. I thought they were leading us astray to give their friends, who must be very numerous from the tracks seen, a chance to muster and attack us.

"On the following morning I let the men understand that they would get neither food nor water till we found the remains. In the afternoon of that day they began to feel the pangs of thirst, and some of them began to talk. They then turned west for

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seven miles and then north-west for four miles, when we camped for the night, Saturday, 27th February. I gave the men each one quart of water that night, and next morning they took us direct north-west for ten miles to a large gum creek running north past the eastern end of the Opthalmia Ranges, showed us the scene of the murder, and the grave of the older man, then a mile and a-half further up the creek the grave of the younger man. They could have taken us west of the place of where we caught them on the same day in about ten miles. The Murder Described

"The distance we travelled from Toongoonarragee Pool to place of murder was 250 miles. When the natives began to suffer from thirst they spoke out and said the chief and another man, two different from those first given, were amongst the murderers, but I believe the lot were concerned. I had promised to release them, so did so next day. The natives said they attacked the men while asleep at night; that the old man fought desperately and shot one native in the shoulder, and he got speared in the side and under the left ear. I have the two spear heads. The younger man ran away with a spear in his side, but some of the natives followed him and killed him at the place we found him buried. They had buried the younger man roughly in some dry sand, but the old man was wrapped in grass and leaves. From the broken spears we collected it must have been a hard fight.

"The natives said these men had come from a long way north-east, following some old horse-tracks; that one was a much older man than the other, with black hair and beard; but the younger man only had a few hairs on his chin. Two camels went away west and one back north-east. The natives further up said one camel had been wandering about, going west, south, and then back north. I tried to find out what equipment they had, but our native could not speak nor understand their language very well, so I could not vouch for their answers. According to them the

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Remains Unidentified

men had two wooden tanks, two galvanised iron tanks, two quart pots, two billies, and other things I could not understand. They took everything away into the hills and destroyed them. The unfortunate men got among a most dangerous tribe of natives, and a number of murders committed by them never having been discovered has made them very daring.

"The party are all well, and I cannot speak too highly of the courage and zeal shown by the whole party, everyone doing his utmost to forward the search. I am sending this on to Nullagine, sixty miles away. As camels and horses knocked up shall rest two days, and reach Nullagine about Wednesday next. I have brought the two skeletons, so please send instructions to Nullagine as to their disposal. Should the remains not be those of the missing men my camels are quite unfit to undertake another journey, having travelled over some very rough country, making them very footsore, and they are too low in condition."

This telegram was repeated to Mr. L. A. Wells and to Mr. Magarey; and the Government, in reply to specific enquiries as to the possibility of discovering any of the equipment or articles belonging to the murdered men, received the following additional information from Mr. Rudall:

"The chance of finding any equipment or articles is remote, as the natives would destroy or bury everything. Every native's camp has tomahawks, billies, quarts, and articles of clothing, taken from mining towns or stations and distributed, so that it is difficult to determine what belonged to the murdered men; and the natives are such liars that it is almost impossible to obtain the truth. Their cunning is unequalled in the whites. Isdell examined the remains this morning, and states that they are those of white men. I have received copy of description sent by Mr.

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Magarey, saying Jones was 6 ft. 2 ins. tall. The remains of what appears to be the younger man cannot be more than 5 ft. 8 ins. I find that there is a hole indented in the top of the younger man's skull, large enough to hold a pea; this was evidently made in early childhood. . . . The hair I described as black appears to be brown, and rather fine." Search Renewed

Mr. L. A. Wells wired that the heights of the remains discovered did not agree with those of the missing men, his cousin being fully six feet tall, and his companion two inches taller. Mr. Magarey, at the same time, telegraphed from Adelaide to the Surveyor-General of Western Australia:

"Confident remains found not of Calvert men. Can you inform us yet whether Rudall available and prepared to continue search at once? We consider tracks found on Oakover are those of missing men, who probably headed thence towards Johanna Springs in search of locality of Running Water and thence onward."

The receipt of these telegrams, giving the respective heights of Wells and Jones, convinced Mr. Rudall that the remains they had rescued were not the object of their prolonged efforts, and preparations were hurried forward for further search parties to be despatched, under the leadership of Mr. Rudall and Mr. L. A. Wells respectively, the former to go *via* Braeside and Christmas Pool to Johanna Springs, and the latter to proceed direct from the Fitzroy River.

The mystery surrounding the fate of the two men whose murdered bodies were discovered by Mr. Rudall

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The Law of the Bush

was never cleared up. A police officer in Perth, who was for a considerable time at Mount Clara Station on the Upper Murchison, believes the bodies to be those of two miners, who, with a companion, had set out on a prospecting tour in the direction of the Opthalmia Ranges. One man, named Michael Morrissey, returned to the Murchison and explained that he had left his companions, as they were bent on going into a country where he said he knew there was no water. Morrissey's career was afterwards a chequered one; and as he had committed suicide at Lawlers some nine months before the bodies were found, all possibility of getting them identified was lost.

Many surmises that were made as to the identity of the remains, and the inquiries received from persons who had known of the departure of friends into the interior and had not since heard of them, showed clearly that the tale of victims claimed by the drought, the sand, and the spears of the great Australian desert will never be accurately determined.

It also disclosed the unwritten and little-known law among the whole corps of adventurous miners, that should the body of an unfortunate man be "happened upon" no mention is to be made of the fact. This seemingly curious indifference is explained by the fact that to make a report of such a discovery would necessitate a return to the nearest police station, and no remuneration is paid for the loss of time thus entailed.

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Wells' and Rudall's Renewed Efforts

On March 17th Mr. L. A. Wells, with Mr. Keartland, Mr. Trainer, Bejah his Afghan, a black tracker belonging to the Fitzroy police, and two natives set out with camels. They expected to reach Johanna Springs in three weeks, and to arrive at the spot where Mr. Rudall had first discovered the tracks of men and camels about three weeks later. On April 9th Mr. Rudall left Braeside with eleven camels. He proceeded, in the first place, to Wadera Creek, to verify a native report of the murder of two whites in that locality. The result of his investigation was to convince him that although a murder had been committed there, the men he was in search of had not come so far south. He accordingly made for Separation Well, and then northward as far as latitude twenty-one degrees. His intention was to push on to Johanna Springs, but his provisions were now almost exhausted, and he was compelled to strike across the desert to Braeside, where he arrived on June 21st, after a journey of 900 miles, during which the lives of his party were several times in jeopardy, owing to scarcity of water and the treachery of the natives.

Mr. Wells' melancholy mission was attended with more success, and it was left for him, the brave leader of a devoted expedition, to ultimately rescue the bodies of his lost companions from an unknown resting-place. On the first of May he returned to Derby (West Australia) with the news that he had discovered traces of the missing men, and the following telegram, dated Perth,

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Wells Partly Successful

June 10th, 1897, lifted the veil which for seven long months had shrouded in mystery the fate of the two hapless explorers:

> "The bodies of Charles Wells and George Jones, the two missing members of the Calvert Exploring Expedition, have been recovered in the desert. The men had evidently died of thirst. Jones had been keeping a diary as long as he was able to do so; in it he speaks of the terrible heat experienced, the loss of the camels of the expedition, and the final and unsuccessful search of the men for water."

The details of the last stages of the anxious and arduous research, which culminated in the recovery of the remains, is told in Mr. Wells' two graphic telegrams to Mr. Magarey. The first, despatched from Derby, is as follows:

> "I have just arrived here. The party is all well. The search has been partly successful, but unsatisfactory. We left Gregory Station on March 30th, with Keartland, Trainer, Bejah, and two natives, Wandy and Dick. We also had the native, Peter. We travelled up the Nerine Creek to Mount Arthur, and thence south-easterly for fifty miles. Peter here got some natives and questioned them regarding the report of Gregory. They denied the truth of it, and declared that they only knew of my previous trips through this country. I arranged for two of these natives to come on with me to the next tribe, the Kammara. We then travelled in a south-south-easterly direction to a poor soakage well—the furthest one these natives knew of. They then offered to go westerly. I pointed to smoke almost due south, and told them I was going to that point. Next morning we saw the smoke in front of us, and shortly afterwards cut the fresh track of a black fellow going north-west. I sent the natives to track him,

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and continued on. Wandy caught a gin, who took us to a poor soakage well. I encountered two old gins there, and explained that I wanted water for the camels. They pointed in several other directions for other water. The camels, after further travelling south, were knocking up, when we reached good spring water; and the natives told us that there was another well to the south-east, not very far distant. I found, on thorough examination around the spring, that there was nothing to indicate that whites had ever been there, except that on a shady leichardt there I saw a distinct mark on the bark in the shape of a large diamond. Keartland and I endeavoured to remove the bark and young wood, but found that the old wood was decayed by dry rot. Missing Men Tracked

"I was obliged to spell the camels at the spring, and four more natives arrived. I saw that one of them had round his waist a piece of cloth, which I recognised as being from a pair of my cousin's trousers. I took hold of the cloth, without asking any questions, and one of the other natives said, 'Dead man,' 'dead white fellow,' pointing at the same time a little south of west. I asked them if there was one man dead, and they corrected me by saying two were dead. This they repeated often, and pointed always in the same direction. They also repeatedly tried to explain that there were only bones—that there was nothing left of the bodies. Keartland gave a handkerchief in exchange for the cloth. None of the natives knew a word of English. During the evening two of the Kammara men signified their willingness to take us to the dead men. As usual, we sent all the natives, excepting our own boys, out of the camp to sleep, telling the two who were to accompany us to come back early.

"Next morning, April 11th, I found all the natives had cleared out during the night. I then suspected foul play, and that the natives were afraid to show me the spot. Following the directions given by the natives on April 12th, I travelled nearly due west seventeen miles, and next day nine miles further, crossing my

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Further Traces

track of last October without seeing anything of it. I then altered my course south-easterly for the smoke, and eight miles further on this bearing bore a fresh track of a native going our way. I ran the track for one mile and camped, sending Nandy on along the track to ascertain if the natives were close to us. On returning, he reported four or five natives camped about one mile further on, and he said there were some gins and children. Anticipating no trouble in taking one of these, and afraid that they would discover our presence before morning, I left Keartland and Trainer in charge of the camp, and started on foot with Bejah and two boys with their clothes off.

"On arriving at the last sand-ridge I picked up an old summer wurley geological map of West Australia, which I had supplied my cousin with. I saw no tracks of natives near it, but on the flat, about fifteen chains distant, I saw two black fellows standing up with other natives under a tree. I made the boys show themselves, and called out. Seven armed natives, with spears, boomerangs, and waddies immediately came out and challenged us. Bejah became excited, and wanted to fire at them, and the boys got behind and said, 'Look out, boss, him sulky.' Leaving Bejah and the boys, I advanced, calling to them to come up, and giving them a sign to put their weapons down. This they refused to do till I walked up to them and took hold of their spears. They then kept close to their weapons, and tried to get hold of my rifle several times. Bejah had to deal with three of them, and was pushing them off with the end of his gun.

"In the camp I saw two enamel plates, a quart pot, my cousin's tomahawk, with his initial 'F,' which we all saw him burn on the handle at the depôt, and other articles. I questioned the natives about these things, and also about the two whites, but they refused to say a word, and wanted me to clear out. I tried to coax them over to the camp for food, but they kept too close to their spears, and refused the invitation made by the boys. I

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picked up the property of my cousin which we saw, at which the natives demurred. They were especially unwilling to part with the tomahawk. We returned to camp before dark, and on the following morning went over to the well and made a thorough search, and found a pack-bag in a tree, and a set of spare hobble rings, a quantity of hoop iron from water cask, some pieces of camel riding saddle rope, some kapok from pillows, some pieces of clothing, and part of a blue blanket. Treachery of Natives

"I saw no signs of camels having been about the well, no tree was marked, and there was nothing to show that my cousin and Jones were at this well. There were no instruments, no journal, and nothing on the plan found to give any information. The natives had all cleared, and I had lost the opportunity of getting one. I could not have taken one of the seven without a struggle, or shooting some of the others. Had I known there were so many of them I should have taken Keartland and Trainer as well. I also recognised one of the natives as one of the eleven who were lying in wait for my party last October.

"Another native showed a wound in his arm like a bullet hole, and said that the white fellow had done it. The goods recovered have evidently been in the possession of the natives for some time; and the natives at this well, and at Johanna Springs, had only been in either locality for a day or two, as all the other tracks seen in either neighbourhood were too old to follow. On April 15th, I reached Johanna Springs to water the camels, but saw no more smokes. On April 16th we travelled west seventeen miles, and on the next day examined the country north and south of the camp. I found no more waters, and was unable to run down the old tracks of natives. During the afternoon Wandy found a poor-soakage well seven miles north-east of the camp, but there was no sign here of a camp. We camped three miles further north, travelled north-west again, and crossed my old track without seeing it, following during the day the same course.

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The Last Attempt

Two camels knocked up during the morning, but, fortunately, we came upon some old natives' camp, and found a good well of water.

"On April 20th we spelled camels at the well, and next day started for Gilligulli Creek, and reached the river on April 26th. We here met a native, who told me that Peter had gone west after leaving me in the desert, and had met other natives who had told him there was one dead man and two dead camels with a pack saddle, three pack bags, blankets, and papers, about thirty-five miles south-east of Mount Arthur. I asked the native how all were dead at one spot, and he said Peter told him the natives had speared the camels and the man, and they had lied to me when being questioned before. Peter did not return to Gregory, but stayed on at Nearima Creek.

"There is no doubt in my mind that one or two men are dead near the well where I found the goods in possession of the natives, and that murder has been committed by the natives. I saw that another search must be made south-east of Mount Arthur, and I wish to return there. The party should consist of camels and horses, and, say, four white men, including two police officers and two natives. Power should be given to arrest the natives and make them show where the dead man is. Keartland and Trainer can return by the next boat. During this last trip the camels have travelled over 500 miles. We found it intensely hot in the sandhills, and the rainfall has been very light."

On May 10th, Mr. L. A. Wells, accompanied by Sub-inspector Ord, Trooper Nicholson, two trackers and the faithful Afghan Bejah, set out from Derby with camels and horses to recover and bring back the remains which they now felt so confident of locating. They left Gregory's on the 14th May, and travelled *via* Mount

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Arthur to the spot where the white men and camels were reported, but found the report groundless. The following description is taken from Mr. Wells's next telegram to Mr. Magarey, dated June 10th, 1897:— Finding the Bodies

"Cutting a new pad from there, we travelled to Ngoaaddapa and Kullga Agunum to a point about fourteen miles north-north-east of Johanna Springs. On May 24th we sent Bejah and a tracker along the pad to Johanna. Ord, Nicholson and myself, with the other tracker, pushed on in the direction of smoke seen the previous day, and after going fourteen miles we ran some natives down in their camp. Here we found a large piece of the iron bow of a camel riding saddle. The natives said it was taken from dead white men, and added that the sun had killed them. The natives were bold, and refused to go with us until the handcuffs were used. They tried many devices to avoid going to Johanna Springs, Ord and Nicholson having to drive them.

"After that we spelled a day at Johanna, and tried to induce the natives to point out the direction of the dead men, but without success. The following day we travelled the pad, going westerly twelve miles, when we reached a high point from which we obtained a good view of the surrounding country. Here again we tried the natives, but they would eagerly point in any direction except that in which they knew the dead men to be. It was found necessary to resort to stronger measures, and they then took us south-east for five miles, and south-west for two miles, to the spot for which we had so long been seeking. It is only six miles from the well where I found the stolen goods last April, on a true bearing of fifty-seven degrees, and only twenty chains north-east of my track between the well and Johanna Springs.

"I at once recognised Charles by his beard and features, the skin having dried on his face and body. He lay under a desert gum tree, where he had been erecting a fly for a shade. On the

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The Mystery Solved

top of a sand ridge, about one chain westerly, the remains of George Jones were found. The body had evidently been covered with sand by Charles, who had then gone to the other tree to wait death itself. The natives had carried off everything of any use to themselves. The woodwork of both kegs, portions of the camel pack-saddle and one riding saddle, one leather pack-bag, a leather satchel, Jones's compass, a Prayer Book, a leather pouch, a tin box with medicines, a journal, and a note to his parents were close by him. We could find no plan or any letter left by Charles. All the firearms had been carried off by the natives.

"Jones's journal was kept up to the time of returning to Separation Well, nine days after we left it, and there was no entry atfer that time. From the journal and the note I gather that they travelled on a bearing from 290 deg. to 300 deg. for four and a-half days, a distance of eighty-one miles; then north-east for thirteen miles; then, without giving any bearing or distance, travelling south-easterly to the outgoing track, which they followed to Separation Well. The journal of Jones speaks of intense heat and the absence of camel feed; of having searched for water without success, and of the fact that both he and Charles were feeling unwell.

"In his letter he says that after resting five days at Separation Well, they started following the tracks. Soon after one camel died. They then had to walk until they became exhausted. He also speaks of the terrible heat. After arriving at the spot where we found the bodies, they lost their remaining camels, and were both too weak to follow them. Jones tried, two days before writing his letter, to go after them; but after travelling half-a-mile he became unwell and had to return. At the time of writing there were but two quarts of water left, and he said they did not expect to live much longer.

"There was no date to this letter, but from his statement they must have left Separation Well on October 23rd. They probably

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travelled by night and lost my track. Allowing fifteen days, they would have reached the spot where we found them about November 8th. From what we saw of the spot where the equipment was, it would appear that my cousin's riding camel had died, and that they had left his saddle, bringing everything else on. The remains are sewn up in canvas and will be placed in coffins here, ready for removal to Adelaide by the next boat." How they Died

The result of the long search thus brought to light one of the most pathetic stories in the history of Australian exploration. Lying within a few yards of each other, among the sand ridges of a country described as "a scene of awful desolation," were the bodies of Charles F. Wells and his boy companion—for Jones was a lad under twenty years of age, who had not long finished his college course at Adelaide. Looking at the dates, it is probable that the ill-fated pair reached their last camp just about the time when Mr. L. A. Wells, with the main body of the expedition, in the last stages of exhaustion, struck the Fitzroy River.

This was on November 6th, and guess-work brings the two victims to the spot where their remains were found—not more than a march from Johanna Springs—about November 8th. Thus they were past all hope of help before news of their peril arrived. They were dead when they were first reported missing; and they died, not mercifully by the spear of the blacks, but were doomed to face a lingering death from thirst and weakness, with the pitiless sun above them and the scorched desert on every side. It is possible—since Jones's letter

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The Explorer's Lot

was undated—that the wanderers, exhausted and half dazed, had lost count of time in the last stages of their sufferings. With camels gone, water and provisions spent, despair must have gripped them long before the end came. There was nothing for it but to lie down and die, and the lot of the man who lived longest was the worst.

Dr. Jefferies, in the course of his funeral address in Adelaide, pictured the scene with vivid, impressive eloquence; the death of Jones, the solitary, awful, digging of the grave by his friend Charles Wells, and then—"was it hours after, or days? he too lay down to die. To die! When death comes to us in our own home, with our beloved to minister to our last wants, we resign ourselves to the common lot. But when the sensitive, shrinking human spirit is conscious that the pitiless forces of Nature are advancing to destroy, when the dread angel of Death comes on the wings of the desert air, ah! then death is terrible indeed. To die, cut off in the midst of days, overpowered by the material energies that God intended to be our servants, to die in a sahara of sand, blinded by the glare of the sun, suffocated by heat, parched by thirst; to die, never more to look on green fields and the many-tinted flowers, never more to walk the streets of the city, or to join with the multitude that keeps holiday; never more to see father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters far away, but just to die!"

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Australia's Tribute

But, as Dr. Jefferies testified in the peroration of his address, "This sad calamity, for which all Australia mourns, is the old, old story of the advance guard of the race, toiling with bleeding feet in the desert ways, and toiling often to death in order that the millions might safely follow. These men were true sons of Britain—eager, adventurous, bold. Britain is what she is to-day, mistress of the seas, Queen ruler of one-fourth of the children of men, because of the noble army of martyrs who have laid down their lives for their country.

"'Never the lotus closes, never the wild fowl wake,
But a soul goes out to the east wind that died for England's sake;
Man, or woman, or suckling, mother, or bride, or maid;
Because on the flag of the English the English flag is stayed.'"

Success in exploration is as much an inspiring, national, and individual object in Australia as victory in war ever was in the old world; and when men, who have accepted the risk for the love of the work, and in the spirit of adventure which characterises the race, fall victims to untoward circumstances, their friends and fellow-countrymen should honour their bravery, as well as lament their fate:

"They never fail who die in a great cause!"

In the dusk of the twilight, on a peaceful Sabbath Day, July 18th, 1897, the last sad scene in the tragedy of the Calvert Expedition was performed in the North Road Cemetery, Adelaide. In this beautiful burial ground the remains of Charles Frederick Wells and

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